



2714 Hudson Street
Baltimore, MD 21224-4716
P: 410-534-6447
F: 410-534-6475
www.ghhi.org

February 25, 2022

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **HB783 – FAVORABLE** – Public Schools – Mold Assessment and Remediation

Dear Chairman McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) has a long-standing history of advocating for families and children on the important issue of lead poisoning prevention and addressing healthy homes hazards such as mold in homes and schools. GHHI is the nation's largest healthy homes organization and is dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health and advancing racial and health equity through the creation of healthy, safe, and energy efficient homes. Across the State of Maryland, GHHI provides healthy homes education and direct housing intervention services to reduce triggers that cause asthma episodes and other respiratory issues, lead hazards and household injury risks while improving energy efficiency in homes for children, adults and seniors.

Mold is most commonly found indoors in buildings in damp areas with poor ventilation. Mold occurs due to inadequate ventilation, leaking roofs, water infiltration, faulty plumbing and other conditions that cause mold growth. The CDC states that mold exposure can cause or exacerbate many health issues such as asthma, upper respiratory conditions and COPD¹. The presence of mold is a well-established trigger of asthma episodes and contributes to other negative health conditions.

Legislation is needed to due to the lack of standards for testing for mold and properly remediating mold hazards identified in schools in Maryland. HB783 will insure that regulations are developed and that important preventive measures are put in place including:

- Require timely and proper inspections of schools for the presence of mold;
- Establish mold remediation standards to address mold hazards while also requiring safe work practices that prevent exposure to occupants and workers;
- Improve public reporting and notification of mold inspection results.

¹ See CDC - Mold at <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>.

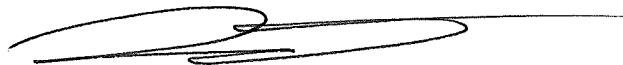
Asthma

25 million Americans are diagnosed with asthma and 1 in 13 children in the United States have asthma. The burden of asthma, a chronic disease, greatly contributes to inequalities in health and social outcomes and health disparities, especially to children and minorities. Mold is a significant contributor to causes of asthma morbidity and exacerbations. Asthma is the number one reason that children miss school. Nationally, 14.4 million school days and 14.2 million work days are missed due to asthma episodes. Over 500,000 children and adults in Maryland have been diagnosed with asthma. Mold contributes to the exacerbation of asthma conditions and results in asthma episodes.

Asthma-related health disparities have disproportionately affected African American residents in Maryland, specifically children. Data available from the Maryland Asthma and Surveillance Reports demonstrates that African American asthmatics in Maryland visit the emergency room 5 times more often than White asthmatics and are hospitalized 2.7 times more often than White asthmatics in Maryland. Many asthma episodes are preventable, yet high rates of asthma related emergency department visits and hospitalizations result in substantial medical costs for the state and its residents.

Maryland students and teachers need to know that their schools are safe and that they are not being exposed to hazardous mold conditions in the schools where they learn and work. HB783 will make important improvements in mold assessment and remediation standards for our school buildings to improve safety. We ask for a Favorable report on HB783.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Ann Norton
President and CEO